

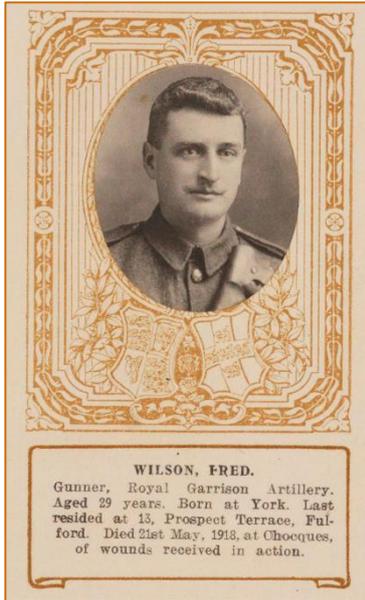
# FREDERICK WILSON

1889 - 1918

113383 GUNNER, 237<sup>th</sup> SIEGE BATTERY  
ROYAL GARRISON ARTILLERY



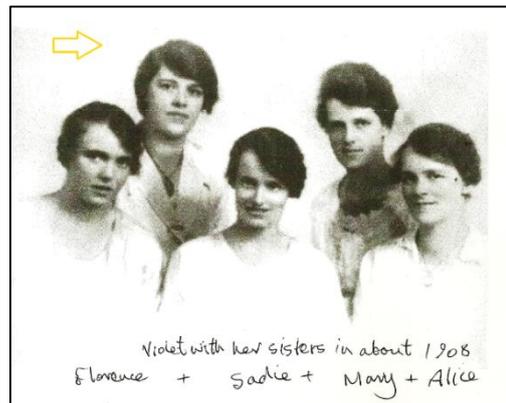
Fred was born on 20<sup>th</sup> February 1889, at 15 Winterscale Street, York to parents William and Blanche Wilson nee Anderson. He was the older brother of Ernest Wilson (see previous biography). Both boys were brought up in the Fishergate and Fulford area.



WILSON, FRED.  
Gunner, Royal Garrison Artillery.  
Aged 29 years. Born at York. Last  
resided at 13, Prospect Terrace, Ful-  
ford. Died 21st May, 1918, at Choques,  
of wounds received in action.

William, his father, worked on the building of York railway station as well as laying the train lines. Work began on the building in 1872 and was completed by North Eastern Railways in 1877.

On completion, William retrained as a publican and took over the Wellington Inn, Alma Terrace,



Violet with her sisters in about 1908  
Florence + Sadie + Mary + Alice

York, later moving to the Saddle Inn, Fulford. Fred was living with his parents and working at the Wellington Inn when he married Violet Stephenson on 7<sup>th</sup> February 1910.

Figure 1: Wilson Family Group

Now named as the



Figure 2: Wellington Inn  
Pub Sign

Inn Keeper, Fred and Violet worked to build up the business. By 1911 they had a young daughter Dorothy, aged 8 months and were assisted by a general servant Millie Bilton, aged 16. Few houses surrounded the Inn and it was the headquarters for Samuel Smith's Dray. Upstairs was a billiard room for the officers from the Garrison opposite.

According to local accounts, fighting was a regular occurrence in the street outside.

Fred retrained once again, this time finding employment as a tram driver. The tram depot, opposite the Barracks, was close to the house which they had recently purchased at 13 Prospect Terrace, Fulford. Fred enlisted on 9<sup>th</sup> December 1915 aged 27. His wife, Violet and their three children Dorothy 5, Olive 4 and Marjorie 2 enlistment papers and the family Prospect Terrace.



Figure 3: 13 Prospect Terrace

were all named on his were still living in



September. After that he was

Figure 4: Fort Paull, Hull  
in Ewshot, Hampshire, (19<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> October), Roffey, Horsham, West Sussex (27<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> November), Lydd in Kent (25<sup>th</sup> November to 6<sup>th</sup> January 1917) and to Codford, Wiltshire (7<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> January).



Figure 5: a Training Camp in winter

Finally, his unit arrived in Portsmouth on 23<sup>rd</sup> January and sailed to Le Havre, France.

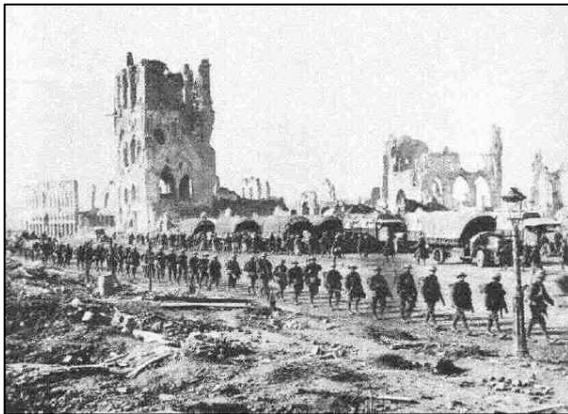


Figure 6: On the March through the ruins

Spring of 1917 Fred saw action in Ypres and at Hell Fire Corner; in June they were engaged in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battle of Ypres and in the Autumn at the Battle of the Menin Road. These areas saw much of the worst fighting of WW1.

In the



Figure 7: A BL 8-inch Howitzer MK

A photograph (above) from the Imperial War Museum collection shows the type of artillery used by Fred's regiment, a BL 8-inch Howitzer MK which is positioned well behind the battle line.



Figure 8: the 237<sup>th</sup> Battalion, 14 August 1918

Another photograph from the IWM shows the Gunners from Fred's unit, near Carvin on 14 August 1918.

Fred is not shown, because he had been killed earlier during in the Spring. at Bethune, one of the 7 phases of the 4<sup>th</sup> Battle of Ypres.

These engagements took place during the Spring Offensive which was a concerted and heavy attack by the German Army in an attempt to win the war.

At this time Germany was in the ascendency and the American troops had not yet arrived in France. The British Army was forced to retreat and with huge casualties.

At one stage, the position was so serious that Field Marshall Haig, the Commander-in-Chief issued his famous "back to the wall speech" which urged British troops to hold fast.

Fred's army record is missing between November 1917 and March 1918, but it is certain that he was actively engaged in action. At the time of his death he was attached to the 89<sup>th</sup> Brigade in Bethune where on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 1918 there was a massive bombardment. It was during this that Fred died and there are conflicting reports about whether he "died of wounds" or that he was "killed in action".

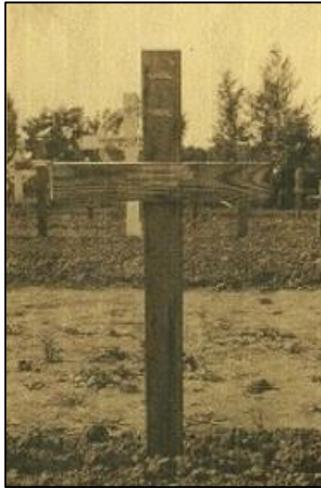


Figure 9:: Cross over Fred's Grave

Whatever the case, he is buried at Chocques Military Cemetery, Pas de Calais, France. VI.A.17

He is buried alongside two others from the 237<sup>th</sup> Siege Battery, who probably died at the same time.

From April to September 1918, during the German advance on this front, the burials were carried out by field ambulances, divisions and fighting units.

Fred was one of the many casualties at this desperate time for the British Army.



Figure 10: Chocques Cemetery

*This account has been produced with the help of Graham Etherinton, Fred's great-grandson. With many thanks.*

REMEMBERED WITH HONOUR

FRED WILSON



AGED 29 YEARS